

concerns from school officials and leaders in the white community, there was no reason for most Negroes to believe that their experience in the school would differ greatly from the years of physical and spiritual intimidation they had known in the past.

A CHOICE MAY NOT BE CHANGED

Most school districts in South Carolina closed their free choice periods by May 30. Some districts, however, kept their choice periods open throughout the summer for Negro students who decided to attend the desegregated schools. Shortly after the closing of the formal choice period, school districts were required to submit to the Office of Education an *estimate* of the number of children in their district who would be attending schools across racial lines for the first time this year. Then, shortly after school opened, districts were required to send in another report giving the *actual* number of children attending schools across racial lines.

A comparison of the two figures for 86 of the 98 school districts operating under freedom of choice indicates that 32 of the districts had an *increase* over the number of students estimated in the first report. In other words, Richland County School District #1 estimated (based on the return of choice forms) that they would have 1,184 Negro students enrolled in desegregated schools, but the actual figure after school opened was 1,240. In 54 school districts, however, the number of students attending schools across racial lines for the first time was *less* than the original estimate. For example, in Charleston District #9 the original estimate was 142 but after school opened only 31 Negro students were reported to be attending desegregated schools. In Chesterfield #3 the number dropped from 5 to 0; in Hampton #2 from 83 to 55; in Orangeburg #3 from 58 to 35; and in Union from 304 to 90.

Certainly in some of the districts where the number dropped it was because the parents of children moved out of the district between the time of the choice period and the time school opened. On the other hand, in those districts where there was a significant decrease, it was because Negro students changed their minds and decided to return to the Negro school rather than to stick with their original choice of attending the desegregated school. This was a direct violation of the guidelines.

Section 181.48 of the guidelines states that once a student has made his choice it could not be changed for any reason except (1) In case of change of residence (2) In case of compelling hardship (3) In case a student required a course of study not offered at that school. In many cases, however, students were permitted to transfer back to the Negro school without meeting any of these conditions. Such cases even occurred after school opened.

In McCormick County, for example, Negro children were permitted to transfer back to Mims High School (Negro) from McCormick High School (desegregated) several days after school had begun. There was no effort made on the part of school officials to keep the children at McCormick High and there were no administrative procedures to be followed in changing schools. The Negro children merely quit going to McCormick High one day and began going to Mims High the next. It is also reported that in Spartanburg District #3, Lee County, and Beaufort County there were similar incidents of transfer after the beginning of school. This was a general pattern across the state.

In Laurens County District #56 seven Negro children were returned to the Negro school by school authorities after they had failed a test at the desegregated school. These children were told that they were not academically prepared to attend the desegregated school. While the students were judged not to be academically fit for the desegregated school they were returned to the same grade at the Negro school as the one they had been in at the desegregated school. Such actions only perpetuate the idea that the Negro school is an inferior educational institution and that its products are "unready" to compete with whites.

HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS

There has been some harassment of Negro students in desegregated schools since the beginning of the 1966-1967 school session. In Dorchester District #1 a child threw a baseball at a Negro student, a Negro girl was hit by a white girl in the restroom, and white students threw rocks and other missiles at the Negro students. Students are segregated in the classrooms and on the school buses.